

them. Filled with doubt, she went to inquire of her former wet nurse who answered, "I do not know anything about your banquet."

Now it was evident that the bodhisattva⁹ had helped the princess out of sympathy. She acquired a fortune and henceforth escaped poverty. This is an unusual event.

15

On the Reward of Copying the Hoke-kyō and Holding a Service for a Mother in Revealing the Cause of Her Rebirth as a Cow¹

Takahashi no muraji Azumabito 高橋連東人² was a very wealthy man in the village of Hamishiro, Yamada district, Iga province 伊賀國山田郡噉代里.³ He copied the *Hoke-kyō* for his mother, making a vow, saying, "I want to invite a monk related to my vow by karma to hold a service for her salvation."⁴ When he finished preparing a place for the service on the following day, he called a servant and said, "The first monk you happen to meet I will make the officiating monk. Don't overlook any monk who seems to be able to perform esoteric rites⁵ and bring him to me."

The servant went first, in accord with his master's request, to the village of Mitani 御谷 in the same district.⁶ There he found a mendicant⁷ lying in the road, drunk, with a bag for a begging bowl at his elbow. His name is not known. He was sleeping so soundly that some mischievous person had shaved his head and hung a rope around him

9. Kichijō-tennyō is not exactly a bodhisattva because of its origin in the Hindu tradition, but it is one of Kannon's Tantric variations according to the *Asaba-shō* 阿婆縛抄, VI (DBZ, 40, 2087). Kyōkai, as well as lay devotees, perceived it as one of the bodhisattvas that was always ready to save them. Myōken is also identified with Kichijō-tennyō.

1. Cf. *Sanbō ekotoba* (II, 11), *Hokke kenki* (III, 106), *Konjaku monogatari* (XII, 25). A similar story is found in I.10.

2. Takahashi is the name of a native family, known to have served the Imperial Table Office (内膳司 *Naizenshi*).

3. Present Ayama-gun, Mie-ken 三重縣阿山郡.

4. 濟度 *saido*, to guide people across the sea of samsara and over to the other shore, that is, to salvation.

5. 修法 *shuhō*, *suhō*, or *zuhō*.

6. Unidentified.

7. 乞者.

like a surplice without waking him. Seeing him, the servant woke him with a greeting and asked him to visit his master.

On his arrival, the master greeted him with respect and faith and kept him inside the house for a day and a night, during which time he made a clerical robe in haste and offered it to the mendicant. The mendicant asked "Why have you treated me like this?" and the host replied, "I would like to ask you to expound the *Hoke-kyō*." Then the mendicant said, "I have no learning. I have simply stayed alive by reciting the *Hannya dharani*⁸ and begging food." The host, however, repeated his entreaty. The mendicant thought to himself that the best way for him was a secret escape. Knowing that the mendicant intended to run away, the host had him watched.

That night, the mendicant had a dream. A red cow came to him, saying, "I am the mother of the master of this household. Among his cattle there is a red cow, whose calf is none other than I. Once in my former life, I stole property from my son, and now I am atoning for it in the form of a cow. I have confided this to you with respect and sincerity since you are going to preach on the Mahayana scripture⁹ for me tomorrow. If you feel any doubt about my story, please prepare a seat at the back of the hall where you will preach tomorrow. You will find me seated there."

Awaking from this startling dream, the mendicant was very curious. The next morning he went up to the lecturer's seat, saying, "I am ignorant of Buddhist teachings. I came to take this seat in compliance with my host's entreaty. But I have one thing to tell you, which is a revelation that came to me in a dream." Then he told about the dream in detail. Whereupon the host stood up, prepared a seat, and called the cow, which took the seat and lay down. In sorrowful tears he said, "Indeed this is my mother! I had no idea! Now I will forgive her." The cow heard his words and sighed. When the service ended, the cow died suddenly. All the congregation cried so bitterly that there were echoes of weeping in the hall and in the garden. Nothing has ever been so miraculous as this. The son continued to accumulate merits for his mother.

We know that this miraculous event took place as a consequence of the son's extreme faith born of his feeling for his mother, and the mendicant's merits accumulated from reciting the divine dharani.

8. The dharani in the *Hannya shin-gyō*.

9. 大乘, in this case *Hoke-kyō*.